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faculty of music
university of toronto



THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VICTOR FELDBRILL, CONDUCTOR

Stella Ng, Pianist

MACMILLAN THEATRE

8 P.M.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1979

PROGRAM

Passacaglia and Fugue for Orchestra

HARRY SOMERS

The Passacaglia and Fugue of Harry Somers is the most ambitious study in contrapuntal technique that was to come from the composer's output of the 1950's. This period, preceded by the apprentice years of the forties and followed by the sixties, where Somers moved away from the more traditional exposition and development of "themes" toward texture and sound colour as compositional elements, was a period devoted to the recognition of historical models and to the unification of its structures with the harmonic vocabulary of the present. Somers himself stated that "...during the early fifties I was very involved with contrapuntal technique, attempting to unify conceptions of the Baroque and earlier, which appealed to me enormously, with the high tensioned elements of our own time." It was through this interest that Somers was drawn to one of the most ambitious of Baroque forms, the passacaglia and fugue.

Somers' work follows closely the Baroque form in its use of characteristic compositional devices, yet each movement has a widely diverse character and is based on different treatments of the twelve tone chromatic scale. The repeating passacaglia bass which acts as the organizing fundament of the first movement, is made up of six pitches while the remaining six pitches (Bb - B \flat - C# - F# - G# - E) are the basis of the movement's secondary material. A good example of the complexity of counterpoint is found at the eleventh repetition of the bass pattern where the pattern migrates into the middle and high registers (as is common with the passacaglia of the past) and is followed by a combination of the Retrograde Inversion, Inversion and Original statements of the passacaglia bass at different pitches. The fugue, on the other hand, is a chromatic twelve-note series which not only controls pitch succession within individual voices, but, through its inversion, determines the beginning pitch of each entry of the fugal subject. It exhibits the traditional technique of stretto and that most characteristic Somers' trait, in evidence since the first String Quartet, the superimposition of two or more layers of sound events moving at contrasting speeds. Both movements, the intensely lyrical passacaglia with its many tonal implications and the terse dynamic atonal fugue, exhibit a contrapuntal and cumulative point of climax which gives to each movement a structural autonomy. Yet the entire work succeeds due to the diversity of its parts and due to the persuasive handling of the compositional problems which are posed. The Passacaglia and Fugue has become one of Somers' best known and most frequently performed works, a status it richly deserves.

STELLA NG is a third year student in the Bachelor of Music Degree in Performance program at the Faculty of Music.

She is studying with Anton Kuerti and Jane Coop.

LAST YEAR THE FACULTY OF MUSIC ASKED ITS MANY FRIENDS FOR SUPPORT OF ITS ACTIVITIES. THE RESPONSE TO THIS PLEA WAS GRATIFYING AND THE FACULTY THANKS YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS. OF THE MANY CHALLENGES STILL FACING US, THE MOST TROUBLESOME IS THE NEED TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL AID TO THOSE STUDENTS WHOSE RESOURCES ARE LIMITED. IF YOU WISH TO HELP, WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO DEPOSIT YOUR CONTRIBUTION IN OUR SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY FUND. PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO:

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A RECEIPT SUITABLE FOR TAX PURPOSES WILL BE PROVIDED.

GUSTAV CIAMAGA,
DEAN.

U OF T SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PERSONNEL 1979-80

Violin I

Suzanne Bégin, Ottawa
Janice Bing Wo, Toronto
Doug Brierley, Ottawa
Angelo Calcafuoco, Sault Ste. Marie
Martha Campbell, Toronto
Marc Destrubé, Victoria, BC
Robin Elliott, Kingston
* Mark Friedman, Toronto
+ Catherine Goldberg, Toronto
Allyson Lyne, Edmonton
Kensuke Mizumoto, Connecticut
Christian Prevost, Montreal
Pauline Salesse, Chicoutimi
Yung Chul Song, Toronto
Mark Wells, Toronto

* concertmaster

+ assoc. concertmaster

Violin II

Luigi Baccin, Toronto
Arden Bryan, Granton
Doreen Fraser, Toronto
Norman Hathaway, Toronto
Carol Jenkins, Toronto
Hiroko Kagawa, Toronto
Patricia Kuschak, Toronto
Rod MacDonald, Toronto
Donna Mazur, Toronto
Veronica Moloney, Kitchener
Toni Stanick, Winnipeg
° Paul Thompson, Victoria
! Marianne Urke, Toronto
° Principal ! co-principal

Viola

Ida Goldstein, Toronto
Donna Griblin, Vancouver
Ronald Hay, Sackville, N.B.
Kathleen Hogan, St. John's
Catherine Jillings, Regina
° Valerie Kuinka, Toronto
Charmain Louis, Toronto
Mary Nugent, St. John's
Tracy Poizner, Toronto
David Wadley, Sault Ste. Marie
Elizabeth Watts, Windsor
Elly Winer, North York
° Principal

Cello

Maurizio Baccante, Toronto
Stephen Buck, Toronto
Elizabeth Dolin, Toronto
° Perry Foster, Lethbridge
Derek Gomez, Vancouver
Karen Henderson, Toronto
Jon Ingham, Ancaster
Janet Kuschak, Toronto
Marianne Pack, Toronto
Patricia Pulliam, Atlanta, Ga.
Lindsay Rose, Vancouver
Elaine Thompson, Toronto
° Principal

Double Bass

Ted Husband, Toronto
Cathy Loftin, Toronto
Dave Longenecker, Toronto
Brian Quèbec, Sudbury
Paul Rogers, London
John D. Taylor, Edmonton

Jim Vivian, St. John's
Bruce White, Truro, N.S.

Flute

Debi Brown, Montreal
Claude Cobert, New Bedford, Mass.
Susan Karpo, Edmonton
Scott Mackay, Toronto
Jana Nelson, Athens, Ga.
Ross Pearson, Hamilton
Carol Savage, Saskatoon
Laurel Trainor, Toronto

Oboe

Catharine Calderone, Kitchener
Tina Levy, Halifax
David Sussman, Toronto
Lesley Young, Edmonton

Clarinet

Lori Freedman, Toronto
Carolyn Horne, Windsor
Leif Laakso, Toronto
Keith Loach, Agincourt

Bassoon

Elizabeth Brickenden, Beaconsfield, PQ
Heather Chesley, St. John, N.B.
Peter Hatch, Toronto
Shannon Peet, Toronto

French Horn

Derek Conrod, Dartmouth, N.S.
Carol Dennison, Ottawa
Diane Fair, Toronto
Lise Vaugois, Hamilton
Bonnie Worthen, Toronto

Trumpet

Susan Barber, Toronto
Sam Cancellara, Toronto
Elsbeth Carruthers, Vancouver
Norman Garcia, Ottawa
Robert Venables, Ottawa

Trombone

Susan Dustan, Bowmanville
Steve Fralick, Orillia
Doug Lavell, Vancouver
Mike Newnham, Hamilton

Tuba

Doug Burrell, Montreal

Percussion

David Campion, Toronto
Ken Erskine, Cobourg
John Mele, Toronto
Michael Perry, Toronto

Harp

Gianetta Baril, Edmonton

Orchestra Manager

Carol Dennison

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Allegro con brio

Andante con moto

Allegro

Allegro

No composer like Beethoven, and no other symphony better exemplifies for mankind the musical expression and realisation of the Promethean struggle. This struggle Beethoven portrays in that bold and compelling opening four note motive. Indeed, it is due in no small part to the formidable logic of the musical construction and development of this motive that this work has gained unprecedented popularity, and yet retained its power and clarity. The work transcends the burden of aesthetics and occupies the arena of the world's great art where creative conviction is mixed judiciously with craftsmanship.

It is in Beethoven's sketchbooks that we find the workings of the craftsman and the awesome energy of composition. The earliest sketches of the Fifth date from 1804-5, and by the autumn of 1805 it is clear that Beethoven had conceived of at least three of the four movements. From the sketchbook of 1806-07 we see that not only were the sketches for the third movement the most extensive, but that Beethoven had originally thought of this as a closed movement without the transition or bridge to the finale. It is difficult, now, to imagine the majesty of the apotheosizing final theme without the portentous atmosphere created by the haunting timpani pedal-C of this transitional passage.

The Fifth shared its premiere on December 22, 1808 at the Theater-an-der-Wien with Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, his Piano Concerto No. 4, excerpts from the Mass in C and the Fantasia with Piano-forte and Chorus. The concert was not without its performance problems and the prestigious Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung reserved passing judgement on the work. The second performance, however, at a Gewandhaus concert in Leipzig in January was reviewed with enthusiasm and described as "noble both in feeling and the working out of idea." Today we have come to recognize Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as a universal statement transcending all temporal barriers and attesting to one of music history's greatest minds.

Notes by Charles F. Brown

Piano Concerto in G Major

MAURICE RAVEL

Allegramente
Adagio assai
Presto

After the completion of Bolero, Ravel began working concurrently on the G Major piano concerto and on the Concerto for Left Hand. This division of labour greatly appealed to Ravel in that he was able to create two works that were radically different, not only in the technique of piano writing, but also in the content and expression. Of the two works, the G major concerto, due to its lighter texture and more orthodox form, has generally been considered the weaker work. In reality, however, it remains a fine example of the bright, virtuosic side of Ravel's style.

The concerto follows the classical pattern of a first movement in sonata form, a cantabile middle movement and a festive finale. The first movement is based on three themes of which the first is a scintillating horn pipe tune, accompanied by arpeggio work in the piano. The development section contains a passage for alternating hands very much in the manner of the Toccata from Le Tombeau de Couperin. Finally, the cadenza is functional in that it presents the third theme in the recapitulation and determines the point at which the tonality settles firmly on G.

The Adagio is modeled after the Larghetto of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet (K.581), not in the strict sense, but serving as an aesthetic model. We know from Ravel's own admission that he borrowed from and used as models the works of others. In some cases it was Saint-Saëns, or sometimes folk examples such as Basque folklore which was a considerable nourishing element of his youth. But in this work the "life-giving form" was the spirit of Mozart and in the calm and timeless atmosphere of this beautiful Adagio we can see that Ravel successfully translated his model.

The Finale manifests Ravel's wit and abounds in the decorative, bright colours of jazz and bitonality. The opening call to attention appears twice in G, three times in other keys, and finally in G to round off the concerto. Its bright wit and sententious nature evoked great calls of "encore" at its first performance at the Salle Pleyel in Paris (with Madame Long at the piano and Ravel conducting), and subsequent performances proved that audiences welcomed Ravel's dictum that a concerto should not be serious but gay and brilliant. The G Major concerto is a fulfillment of this belief.